



MEMSA Online
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Time Critical Diagnosis Task Force Update

The Missouri Time Critical Diagnosis Task Force held its second meeting on Thursday, January 31, at the governor's office building in Jefferson City to continue its development of a statewide emergency response system for victims of stroke and ST-Segment Elevation Myocardial Infarction (STEMI). The task force will serve from January through June of 2008 to finalize the guiding principles and advise DHSS on a consensus plan to create a functional system.

With Missouri's heart disease and stroke mortality rates consistently higher than the nation's average, the Time Critical Diagnosis Task Force has an important mission of designing and implementing an effective stroke and STEMI emergency care system. The system will ultimately reduce long-term disabilities, speed up recovery times and save lives in Missouri.

During the January 31 meeting, attendees spent the morning session in two smaller work groups, one for STEMI and one for stroke, to diagram the current system's inputs, actions and outputs. The early afternoon session focused on individual diagrams of inputs, actions and outputs for each component of an ideal system. The late afternoon session divided the task force into hospital and out-of-hospital groups in order to identify common TCD elements of stroke and STEMI diagrams and to identify other elements for an ideal system from the two perspectives.

Studies show that such programs in various states have reduced the patient preventable death rate by 50 percent. Noticing the need to expand the program, states across the country created similar systems where stroke and STEMI patients are transported to hospitals identified as best equipped for their treatment.

After the first Task Force meeting on January 15, Governor Matt Blunt stated, "This collaboration of state, private, and non-profit organizations have joined forces to improve Missourians' health and wellness. More than 100 participants have collaborated to ensure that those who suffer a stroke or certain type of heart attack get the right care in the right place in the right amount of time."

Recently, legislation was submitted for the creation of a stroke and STEMI system. HB 1790 sponsored by Representative Wayne Cooper is an effort led by DHSS and supported by MEMSA, MAA and SAC. Senator Shields is expected to file a similar bill in the Senate. The proposed bill is written with enabling language that would give DHSS the authority to promulgate rules to expand the current trauma system to include heart and stroke systems. As the bill currently reads, it



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"changes the laws regarding hospital designation to include a heart attack center and a stroke center if it meets the criteria of the Department of Health and Senior Service." More information can be found at: www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills081/bills/HB1790.htm

The most recent Time Critical Diagnosis Task Force meeting was held on February 15 (update coming soon) and the next meet will be held February 28 at 9:30 am at the Governor's office building, 200 Madison St., Jefferson City, Room 450. All are welcome to attend. An RSVP sent to Beverly.Smith@dhss.mo.gov is greatly appreciated so that lunch may be served for all attendees.

The meeting's focus will be to define gaps, barriers and issues that impact the implementation of an ideal system from the perspective of the patient, EMS, physicians and health care providers, small and large hospitals, rural and urban regions and the payer.

For more information on the Time Critical Diagnosis Task Force, visit: 360365.org.